

age, or changing the benefit formulas, and creating disincentives for early collection of Social Security benefits. All these ideas are on the table.

I will work with Members of Congress and listen to any good idea that does not include raising payroll taxes. But we cannot pretend that the problem does not exist. Social Security will go broke when some of our younger workers get ready to retire, and that is a fact. And if you're a younger person, you ought to be asking your elected officials, "What are you going to do about it?" Because every year we wait, the problem becomes worse for our children.

And as we fix Social Security permanently, we must make it a better deal for younger workers by allowing them to set aside part of their payroll taxes in personal retirement accounts. The accounts would be voluntary. The money would go into a conservative mix of bond and stock funds that would have the opportunity to earn a higher rate of return than anything the current system could provide. A young person who earns an average of \$35,000 a year

over his or her career would have nearly a quarter million dollars saved in his or her own retirement account. And that money would provide a nest egg to supplement that worker's traditional Social Security check or to pass on to his or her children. Best of all, it would replace the empty promises of the current system with real assets of ownership.

Reforming Social Security will not be easy, but if we approach this debate with courage and honesty, I am confident we will succeed, because our children's retirement security is more important than partisan politics.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:32 a.m. on February 11 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 11 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Statement on the Announcement of Provisional Results of the Iraqi Election

*February 13, 2005*

Two weeks ago, more than 8 million Iraqis defied terrorists and went to the polls. The world saw long lines of Iraqi men and women voting in a free and fair election for the first time in their lives. The United States and our coalition partners can all take pride in our role in making that great day possible.

Today the provisional results of the election have been announced. We still await their review and certification. I congratulate the Iraqi people for defying terrorist threats and setting their country on the path of democracy and freedom. And I congratulate every candidate who stood for election and those who will take office once the results are certified.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Alberto R. Gonzales as Attorney General at the Department of Justice  
February 14, 2005

Good morning. Laura and I are pleased to be here with Al Gonzales, his wife, Becky, and his wonderful family. Thank you all for coming. I turned to Al and said, "It seems like they're cheering pretty loud." He said, "Most of them work for me now." [Laughter]

For the past decade, Al has been a close adviser, an honorable public servant, and a dear friend. Now he assumes a new title. Today it is my honor to call this son of Humble, Texas, the 80th Attorney General of the United States.

I appreciate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor for administering the oath and admitting publicly that she was born in Texas. [Laughter] I want to thank the current and former members of my Cabinet who are here. I appreciate Senator Pat Leahy, Senator Judd Gregg and Kathy, Senator John Cornyn and Sandy, Senator Mel Martinez for joining us today. I thank Congresswoman Grace Napolitano for joining us. I thank the other distinguished guests who are here, and I thank the Texans who have come up.

As Attorney General Gonzales begins his service, he will build on the outstanding work of Attorney General John Ashcroft. Over the past 4 years, Attorney General Ashcroft has started the Department of Justice on the right course in the war on terror. He's helped reduce violent crime to a 30-year low. He's taken vital new steps to protect children from exploitation. John Ashcroft has worked tirelessly to make our Nation safer and more just, and America is thankful for your lifetime of service.

Attorney General Gonzales now joins every employee at the Department of Justice in an urgent mission to protect the United States from another terrorist attack. Few periods in our history have demanded so much of this Department. With Al's

principled leadership, the Department of Justice will continue this important mission and will defend the security of all Americans and the liberty of all Americans.

The men and women of this Department are meeting your duty every day, from your headquarters in Washington to U.S. attorneys offices across the country, to dangerous posts overseas. You've reorganized your resources to confront the threats of this new war. You've devised effective methods to investigate and prosecute terrorists. Some of you have volunteered for demanding new duties in complex areas such as intelligence and counterterrorism.

Our Nation is grateful for your dedication and sacrifice, and in return, we must provide you all the tools you need to do your job. And one of those tools is the PATRIOT Act, which has been vital to our success in tracking terrorists and disrupting their plans. Many key elements of the PATRIOT Act are now set to expire at the end of this year. We must not allow the passage of time or the illusion of safety to weaken our resolve in this new war. To protect the American people, Congress must promptly renew all provisions of the PATRIOT Act this year.

Your mission to ensure equal justice for every American extends far beyond the war on terror. By aggressively prosecuting gun criminals and drug dealers, you make neighborhoods safer for all families. By holding corporate wrongdoers to account, you build confidence in our economy. By protecting victims of child abuse and domestic violence, you help guarantee a compassionate society. And by defending the civil rights of every American, you affirm the dignity of every life and you set an example of liberty for the entire world.

As we strive to provide equal justice, we must ensure that Americans of all races